TL1711-4

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations

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Statement by

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Before the Special Committee on the Situation with

Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on

the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Question of East Timor

In the exercise of the Right of Reply

New York, 8 August 1991

Mr. Chairman,

I need hardly reiterate my delegation's categorical objection to the consideration of the so-called question of East Timor in this or any forum as a matter of principle and this is well-known to all members of this Committee. We have consistently opposed the granting of hearings to so-called petitioners on this matter, for as the record shows, their participation, far from serving any useful purpose, has only provided a platform to launch a constant barrage of unfounded allegations against Indonesia. Apparently this charade is becoming a routine exercise in this Committee. Year in and year out, the same individuals and organizations avail themselves of this forum to render their repititious renditions in a desperate attempt to paint a portrayal of the most horrifying conditions in East Timor. But, worse still, these unfounded accusations do not contribute anything constructive to the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to find ways to achieve a mutually acceptable solution. It is not my Delegation's intention to lend credence to those accusations and slander by responding to them. My Delegation is however compelled to take the floor in order to set the record straight.

As a member of this Committee since its inception, Indonesia takes great pride to have been associated with the work of the Special Committee on Decolonisation. Over the many years, it has assiduously pursued the task of decolonisation of more than 46 Non-Self Governing Territories. Since the General Assembly declared the 1990's as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, it is now more imperative than ever to resolve the real issues of independence and self-determination on which the urgent and undivided attention of the United Nations should rightly be focused, and to which the Indonesian Government remains unswervingly committed.

My government strongly believes that the efforts being exerted by the Special Committee on this non-issue of East Timor should more productively be redirected towards genuine national liberation movements in the other remaining bastions of colonialism and oppression. It is significant to note that the annual voting patterns on this question in the General Assembly have unmistakably shown that there is an increased understanding of the prevailing realities by a wide spectrum of Member States belonging to different regions.

From the outset, we have consistently supported efforts by Portugal to decolonise East Timor. It is an undisputed fact that in the decolonisation process , the people were deprived of peaceful means to determine their own future. The peaceful process undertaken by all political parties of East Timor was aborted by the unilateral declaration of independence by one of the political parties, a minority group of East Timore, the so-called FRETILIN. The result was the outbreak of the civil war. FRETILIN, aided and abbetted by some Portuguese elements launched a reign of terror. The other four political parties representing the majority of the people of East Timor, namely UDT, APODETI, KOTA and TRABALHISTA, prevailed and announced the establishment of the Provisional Government of East Timor. Subsequently the members of the People's Assembly were duly elected, representing all the districts of East Timor. That august body then decided to proceed with the exercise of the right to self-determination on the basis of and in full compliance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV), 1541 (XV) and 2625 (XXV) and to formally request the Government of Indonesia to accept the decision of the people of East Timor for integration with the Republic of Indonesia.

A formal request for integration was presented to the Indonesian Government by a delegation of the People's Assembly on 7 June 1976. The Indonesian House of Representatives approved a Bill of Integration on 17 July 1976, which was signed into law and formally promulgated by the President of the Republic of Indonesia. It is also

indisputable that Indonesia considered the request only after a fact-finding mission was despatched to the territory to determine whether this request genuinely represented the wishes of the majority.

There never was any question of annexing the erstwhile colonial territory. It should be recalled that in exercising their political freedoms and inalienable rights, the people of the East Timor reaffirmed their decision to integrate with Indonesia by participating in the general elections of 1982 and 1987. On the contrary, as a people and a country which has fought a revolutionary war of independence and struggled for scores of years against colonialism, my government by its pronouncenments and actions clearly demonstrated its adherence to the principles governing due process of self-determination and decolonisation. While endeavouring to respond as correctly and restrainedly as possible to circumstances that accompanied that process in East Timor, Indonesia has always acted in accordance with the responsibility incumbent on it, recognised by the United Nations and in conformity with its Charter and resolutions.

It is also a matter of record that the Indonesian Government made every effort to have the United Nations participate in the decolonisation process and never failed to report each and every stage of that process to the Secretary-General, to his Special Representative, to the President of the Security Council and the Chairman of the Committee on Decolonisation.

Perhaps this process was not as perfect as we would have wanted but, then, neither was this the case in Portugal's other former colonies. In fact, the upheaval and turmoil attendant upon the attainment of freedom in former Portuguese territories attests to the utter lack of responsibility on the part of the colonial power to fulfill its obligations as the Administering Power.

In the evolving global trend to resolve conflict situations through dialogue and negotiations, Indonesia on its part, has demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with the Secretary-General to finding a just and internationally acceptable solution to the East Timor question through substantive talks with Portugal held under the auspices of the Secretary-General. Time and again whenever an obstacle arose, the Indonesian Government has always shown flexibility and compromise. However we have made clear from the beginning that Indonesia would never accept any solution that would undermine the decision of the people of East Timor in 1976 to chose integration with Indonesia as a legitimate expression of their right to self determination. On the basis of these understandings, the substantive talks have made some progress. The Secretary-General announced on 28 June 1991 that in the substantive talks between the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and Portugal to the United Nations held the day before under the chairmanship of Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, an agreement was reached on a number of pending issues concerning the terms of reference of the proposed visit by a Portuguese Parliamentary Delegation to East Timor. On 6 August 1991, the Secretary-General further announced that the competent authorities of both sides had approved the agreement reached by the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and Portugal, and that the two sides would hold further talks to consider the practical arrangements for the visit of the Portuguese Parliamentary Delegation.

The agreement reached on the terms of reference and modalities of the visit of the Portuguese Parliamentary Delegation is not only a testimony of Indonesia's goodwill and sincerity in facilitating the efforts of the Secretary-General to find a mutually acceptable solution on the matter, but also indicates that - contrary to the persistent allegations by certain organizations - Indonesia is not hampering access to East Timor. for many years Indonesia reiterated in different forums that international organizations concerned with humanitarian and human rights matters have been operating without restrictions in East Timor, including ICRC, CRS, and UNICEF. Visits by foreign dignitaries

such as Pope John Paul and members of Parliaments of foreign countries, regular visits by diplomats and foreign journalists and their positive reports on the real situation in East Timor are hard-core facts that have always been either ignored or denied by those organizations which consistently engaged in smear campaigns against Indonesia. But the world will continue to obtain information from authentic sources including individuals or organisations who work in, or visit the province and have a genuine commitment to serve the needs and interests of the East Timorese people. The most recent visit by a Portuguese journalist to East Timor summarises the true findings of the situation in the former colony. In his letter of 27 July 1991 to General Try Sutrisno, Commander in Chief of Indonesian Armed Forces, he expressed that the extremely positive conditions in East Timor were in complete contradiction to the negative media reporting in Portugal as well as the other western countries.

My Delegation wishes to add that as further evidence of Indonesia's goodwill, Indonesia has extended an invitation to Professor Peter M. Koojimans who is the Special Rapporteur on *"Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment"* to visit East Timor. On his part, he informed the Commission of the invitation which will allow first-hand observation and gathering of objective information on the situation in East Timor relevant to Mr. Koojimans responsibilities.

It is indeed in Indonesia's interest that access to East Timor is assured, simply because we believe that visits will allow the representatives of Governments, legistators, organizations or individuals with no pre-conceived ideas about the province and acting in good faith will see for themselves that the situation and conditions are not as what have been depicted by those who habitually compaign against Indonesia. Free access will also facilitate the promotion of investment, trade, commerce, and tourism essential for accelerating development efforts.

Amnesty International, aside from leveling the usual slander and accusations, expressed concern over the Indonesian Government's continued refusal to allow its organization to visit East Timor to "investigate" what they call "human rights violations". On this matter my Delegation only wishes to reiterate its position, that Indonesia will not refuse any organization access to East Timor which shows in words and deeds their goodwill and genuine interest to acertain the real situation in East Timor. It would be absurd to expect that Indonesia will allow visits by representatives of organizations which continue to engage in slanderous campaign against Indonesia, like Amnesty International.

As my Delegation has stressed at the outset, Indonesia is strongly opposed to the consideration of the so-called question of East Timor in this or any other forum. We are all the more concerned that matters relating to human rights are being addressed in this Committee by the petitioners as well as in the document before us. The most appropriate forum for addressing questions concerning human rights is the Commission of Human Rights, and not this Committee. It is particularly regrettable that the document relies solely on sources which have consistently taken biased and one sided views on the situation in East Timor.

Mr. Chairman,

After enduring 400 years of colonialism, the civil war of 1975 and its aftermath, East Timor had to contend with the immense problems resulting from its legacy namely : poverty, hunger, illiteracy and misery. While all of us share the universal concern for human rights, including the right to self-determination, there appears to be a tendency to focus only on civil and political rights and not cultural, social and economic aspects of a developing nation.

As a democratic state, it is natural to have differences of opinion in the community. This does not hamper participation of the people in political life. During the

next general elections in 1992, as in the past, the people of East Timor will freely participate in the national vote, thus exercising their constitutional rights and responsibilities with all other Indonesians. Through their elected representatives, the local population are directly involved in national, regional and district level of politics.

It is undeniable that the steady development of the province in all spheres of life-political, economic and cultural have greatly contributed to the establishment of necessary infrastructures in agriculture, health, education, housing, communications and information, tourism and other essential areas. In this regard the Public Relations Bureau of the East Timor Provincial Administration has recently published a book entitled "East Timor Strives for a Better Future". Its contents attests to the provinces potentialities and accomplishments in its developmental drive. We invite all interested parties to read this publication to gain up-to-date information and thus have a better understanding of the provinces conditions.

The ceaseless efforts of the people of East Timor to overcome the backwardness of the colonial era and to achieve parity with the rest of the Republic have been fully supported by the Central Government. This is reflected by the largest per capita annual budget allocations for East Timor. It is pertinent to note in this regard, that several foreign countries have rendered financial assistance to the Indonesian Government for the development of a number of agricultural, irrigation and sanitation projects. The contribution of the Indonesian armed forces have also assisted the people in the province to make tremendous strides by promoting social welfare programs. As the majority of the East Timorese are followers of the Catholic faith, the armed forces were active in assisting the people to erect " the Cruz de Yesus" at Leolima village, District Hato Udo, Ainaro Regency.

Mr. Chairman,

Permit to me to conclude by stating my Delegation's firm view that allowing the petitioners to speak their mind without due to regard to the real purposes and objectives of this august body will only undermine the on-going efforts of the Secretary-General which have shown tangible results.

In light of the aforementioned, it is time for Indonesia's detractors to appraise the decolonisation process with at least a modicum of objections rather than through the prism of their preconceptions and ideological objections. It is high time for those who champion the rights of a few disgruntled voices that it is by respecting the decision of the majority of the people of East Timor their basic human rights can best be served. If there are remaining problems in the efforts to find an internationally acceptable solution, it is our sincere conviction that the appropriate forum is the dialogue between Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the Secretary General. In this connection, we urge members of this Committee to support it as a viable mechanism.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.